WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A television conference system comprising:

a promoter terminal that is used by a promoter who promotes a conference; and

a plurality of participant terminals that are used by participants in the conference and connected to the promoter terminal via a communication line, wherein

a maximum connection line number N of the participant terminals which are connectable to the promoter terminal is previously set, and a connection line number M of participant terminals which are connected to the promoter terminal is set to $M \leq N$.

2. A television conference system according to claim 1, wherein

the participant terminals includes speaker terminals which are enabled to perform two-way communication with the promoter terminal, and audience terminals which are enabled to perform one-way communication with the promoter terminal, and the connection line number M of participant terminals which are connected to the promoter terminal is set to $M = 2S + T$ where S is a number of connected speaker terminals and T is a number of connected audience terminals.

3. A television conference system according to claim 2, wherein

in response to a voice request from one of the audience terminals, the promoter terminal selects one of the speaker terminals which is transferable to an audience terminal, transfers the selected speaker terminal to an audience terminal, while transfers the audience terminal issuing the voice request to a speaker terminal.

4. A television conference system according to claim 3, wherein

the promoter terminal previously sets a speaker terminal which is transferable to an audience terminal, and, in response to the voice request, selects the preset speaker terminal to transfer the selected speaker terminal to an audience terminal.

5. A television conference system according to claim 3, wherein

the promoter terminal previously sets plural speaker terminals which are transferable to an audience terminal, while allocating priorities to the speaker terminals, and, in response to the voice request, transfers one of the speaker terminals which is selected in accordance with the

priorities.

6. A terminal for a television conference system in which a promoter terminal that is used by a promoter who promotes a conference, and participant terminals that are used by participants in the conference are connected to one another via a communication line, the terminal comprising

a television conference control unit including

a terminal function selection unit for selecting the terminal to function as either of a promoter terminal of a conference or a participant terminal in accordance with selection, wherein

a maximum connection line number of the participant terminals which are connectable to the promoter terminal is previously set to the television conference control unit.

7. A terminal for a television conference system according to claim 6, wherein

in accordance with selection, each of the participant terminals functions as a speaker terminal which is enabled to perform two-way communication with the promoter terminal, or as an audience terminal which is enabled to perform one-way communication with the promoter terminal.

8. A terminal for a television conference system according to claim 7, wherein

a terminal functioning as the promoter terminal comprises a section for, in response to a voice request from one of the audience terminals, selecting one of the speaker terminals which is transferable to an audience terminal, transferring the selected speaker terminal to an audience terminal, while transferring the audience terminal issuing the voice request to a speaker terminal.

9. A terminal for a television conference system according to claim 8, wherein

the transferring is performed while forming relationships that a connection line number M of participant terminals which are connected to the promoter terminal is set to $M \leq N$, and that the connection line number M of participant terminals which are connected to the promoter terminal is set to $M = 2S + T$ where S is a number of connected speaker terminals and T is a number of connected audience terminals.

10. A terminal for a television conference system according to claim 8, wherein

the speaker terminal is selected in accordance with

preset priorities.

11. A terminal for a television conference system according to claim 7, wherein

each of the terminals functioning as an audience terminal comprises a section for sending a request for transferring to the speaker terminal to the promoter terminal, and a section for, on the basis of a request permission of the promoter terminal, transferring to a speaker terminal.

12. A connection control method for a television conference system in which a promoter terminal that is used by a promoter who promotes a conference, and participant terminals that are used by participants in the conference are connected to one another via a communication line, the method comprising:

setting a maximum connection line number N of the participant terminals which are to be connected to the promoter terminal; and

connecting the participant terminals to the promoter terminal while setting a connection line number M of the connected participant terminals to $M \leq N$.

13. A connection control program that permits a

computer to perform a process for a television conference system in which a promoter terminal that is used by a promoter who promotes a conference, and participant terminals that are used by participants in the conference are connected to one another via a communication line, the program comprising:

setting a maximum connection line number N of the participant terminals which are to be connected to the promoter terminal; and

connecting the participant terminals to the promoter terminal while setting a connection line number M of the connected participant terminals to $M \leq N$.